

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MONTEV 04090 01 OF 02 251215Z
ACTION ARA-14

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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HQ, USSOUTHCOM, SCJ2

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MONTEVIDEO 4090

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (TODMAN, TERENCE A). SHUM, PGOV, PINT, UY
SUBJ: TODMAN MEETING WITH CINCS

1. THE MORNING OF AUGUST 18 ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN, ACCOMPANIED BY THE AMBASSADOR, FEINBERG, LISTER, O'MAHONY AND DAO CALLED ON CINCS VADORA (ARMY) AND PALADINI (AIR FORCE). ADM. SANGURGO SAT IN FOR ADM. MARQUEZ, WHO WAS IN PARAGUAY.

2. TODMAN OPENING BY NOTING THAT HE WAS VISITING URUGUAY TO GAIN A FIRST HAND VIEW OF THE LOCAL SCENE. HE EXPLAINED THAT URUGUAY'S NEGATIVE INTERNATIONAL IMAGE HAS ADVERSLY AFFECTED OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. HE EMPHASIZED THAT ONLY URUGUAY CAN DO SOMETHING TO CHANGE THAT IMAGE AND THAT THE U.S. IS PREPARED TO RESPOND FAVORABLY WHEN REAL IMPROVEMENT IS EVIDENT. THE U.S. DOES NOT INTEND OR PROPOSE TO DICTATE TO URUGUAY ANY SPECIFIC COURSE OF ACTION. HE RECOGNIZED THAT IN PART URUGUAY'S NEGATIVE IMAGE COMES FROM DELIBERATE DEFAMATION BY SELF-SERVING INTERESTS, BUT HE MADE CLEAR THAT MANY RESPONSIBLE AND RESPECTABLE SOURCES ARE ALSO CRITICAL OF THE PERFORMANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT. THIS
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 MONTEV 04090 01 OF 02 251215Z

LATTER GROUP, HE ASSERTED, WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT IN THAT THEY DID INFLUENCE USG ATTITUDES. HE EXPLAINED THAT WE ARE READY TO HELP URUGUAY AND THAT WE SEEK TO UNDERSTAND IN DEPTH THE SITUATION HERE.

3. VARODA SAID HE WANTED TO DISCUSS TWO THINGS: FIRST, HOW TO GO ABOUT CHANGING AN INTERNATIONAL IMAGE, AND SECOND, HUMAN RIGHTS

IN GENERAL. HE THEN REVIEWED THE RECENT HISTORY OF URUGUAY THAT LED TO THE CURRENT SITUATION. HISTORICALLY, HE NOTED, URUGUAYANS HAD ENJOYED FULL LIBERTIES AND A VERY LIBERAL DEMOCRACY. THE LIBERTIES THEMSELVES PERMITTED HER ENEMIES TO SUBVERT AND UNDERMINE HER INSTITUTIONS WHICH EVENTUALLY LED TO INTERNAL WAR. URUGUAY FOUND HERSELF DEFENSELESS BECAUSE OF HER DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM. IN 1971 AND 1972 THE LEGALLY CONSTITUTED PARLIAMENT DID TWO THINGS: DECLARED A STATE OF INTERNAL WAR AND PASSED VARIOUS LAWS WHICH GAVE THE MILITARY CERTAIN EXTRAORDINARY POWERS TO DEAL WITH SUBVERSION. VADORA CONTINUES THAT THE MILITARY HAD ACTED THEREFORE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAWS PASSED BY PARLIAMENT. HE ALSO TOUCHED ON THE FAILURE OF THE JUDICIARY TO TRY AND CONVICT SUBVERSIVES AND OTHER ENEMIES.

4. VADORA SAW URUGUAY AS THE VICTIM OF AN EXTREMELY WELL-FINANCED INTERNATIONAL PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN, WHICH THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT FELT HELPLESS TO COMBAT. HE ADMITTED THAT DURING THE CRISIS OF WAR "THINGS" HAD BEEN DONE WHICH VIOLATED OUR BROAD DEFINITION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. HE FURTHER STATED THAT THESE "THINGS" HAD BEEN INVESTIGATED AND WHERE CULPABILITY HAD BEEN FOUND HAD BEEN CORRECTED. HE INSISTED THAT IT WAS NOT THE DE-LIBERATE POLICY OF THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT TO VIOLATE HUMAN RIGHTS; THAT RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN URUGUAY WAS TRADITIONAL AND STILL IS CURRENT. VADORA THEN CITED SEVERAL INSTANCES IN THE PAST WHEN URUGUAY HAD SUPPORTED THE UNITED STATES CONTRARY TO HER OWN INTERESTS, SUCH AS IN THE 1962 OAS VOTE AGAINST CUBA IN SUPPORT

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MONTEV 04090 01 OF 02 251215Z

OF THE UNITED STATES, ALTHOUGH URUGUAY WAS NOT FIRMLY ANTI-CUBA AT THE TIME. HE STATED THAT OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS 400 URUGUAYANS HAD BEEN TRAINED IN CUBA AND PROMISED TO PROVIDE THE EMBASSY WITH DETAILS. TODMAN SAID HE WOULD REVIEW THE MATERIAL AND RAISE IT WITH THE CUBAN AUTHORITIES.

5. TODMAN EXPLAINED THAT THE U.S. WAS CONVINCED THAT THE BEST METHOD OF COMBATTING COMMUNISM WAS TO STRENGTHEN DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS. WE MUST HACE CONTACT WITH COMMUNIST COUNTRIES BUT THIS IS IN NO WAY EQUIVALENT TO GIVING IN TO THEM. QUITE THE OPPOSITE. IT ENABLES US TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE IN UNDERSTANDING THEIR SOCIETIES AND IN INFLUENCING THEM IN POSITIVE WAYS.

6. VADORA ASKED ONLY THAT WE APPRECIATE THAT THEY WERE ENGAGED IN A LIFE AND DEATH STRUGGLE FOR THE FREEDOM OF URUGUAY. PALADINI JOINED THE CONVERSATION AT THIS POINT TO NOTE HIS INTEREST IN TODMAN'S STATEMENT THAT THE U.S. WANTED TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HAD AND WAS OCCURRING IN URUGUAY. PALADINI STATED THAT IN A POPULATION OF ONLY THREE MILLION, THE 3,000 TUPAMAROS CONSTITUTED A SIZEABLE FORCE. IF THE TERRORISTS HAD BEEN FEWER IN NUMBER THEY COULD HAVE BEEN SUBDUED WHILE PRESERVING INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS. HE SAID THE URUGUAYAN MILITARY IS A SMALL

FAMILY; THAT THOSE KILLED AND WOUNDED WERE A PERSONAL LOSS FOR THE OTHERS. HE COMPLAINED THAT THE EXTERNAL IMAGE OF URUGUAY IS DISTORTED. HE ADMITTED THAT ERRORS HAD BEEN COMMITTED AS IN ANY WAR, BUT CONSIDERED THEM EXCEPTIONS RATHER THAN THE RULE. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD HOW THE U.S. CONGRESS HAD TO RESPOND TO SPECIAL INTERESTS. WHAT HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WAS WHY THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH JOINED THE ATTACK ON URUGUAY.

6. VADORA SAID IN SOME EXASPERATION "WHEN WE DEFEND OURSELVES WE ARE ACCUSED OF BEING ANTI-FREE PRESS". SANGURGO NOTED THAT IN 1973 THE POLITICIANS FAILED AND FAILED BADLY, YET NONE OF THEM HAD BEEN KILLED OR JAILED -- ONLY SENT HOME. BUT NOW THE UNITED STATES LISTENS TO A TRAITOR LIKE WILSON FERREIRA ALDUNATE. TODMAN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SOME SELF-INTERESTED ORGANIZATIONS AND

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 MONTEV 04090 01 OF 02 251215Z

PEOPLE ARE ATTACKING THE GOU. HE POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT WE HAVE HEARD FROM OTHER, MORE RESPONSIBLE, SOURCES WHOSE REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION SENT TO THE GOU HAVE GONE UNANSWERED. THESE CHARGES DEALT WITH DISAPPEARANCES, CHARGES OF TORTURE AND FAILURE OF DUE PROCESS.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 MONTEV 04090 02 OF 02 251301Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MONTEVIDEO 4090

7. VADORA COUNTERED BY SAYING THAT THE JUDICIARY WAS NOT CREATED BY THE MILITARY -- EVERYTHING THAT THEY (THE MILITARY) HAD DONE WAS COMPLETELY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR LEGAL SYSTEM WHICH HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN SLOW AND CUMBERSOME. IN REPLY TO TODMAN'S QUERY ABOUT THE SUSPENSION OF HABEAS CORPUS, VADORA REPLIED THAT THIS HAD BEEN DONE BY THE PARLIAMENT UNDER "MEDIDAS PRONTAS DE SEGURIDAD".

8. TODMAN AFFIRMED OUR INTEREST IN STRENGTHENING THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (IAHRC) AND SUGGESTED THAT THE GOU MIGHT IMPROVE THE INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF ITS INTERNAL SITUATION BY INVITING THE IAHRC TO VISIT HERE. ALL THREE REACTED NEGATIVELY.

9. MR. LISTER PRESENTED A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF OUR HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY AS SEEN FROM MOSCOW AND THE PRESSURE IT WAS PUTTING ON THE USSR. HE ALSO MADE THE POINT THAT ANY COUNTRY THAT VIOLATED THE RIGHTS OF ITS CITIZENS WAS SERVING COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA DESIGNS.

10. MR. TODMAN ASKED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF ALLOWING PRISONERS TO CHOOSE THEIR RIGHT TO EXILE. VADORA AND PALADINI REPLIED THAT CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MONTEV 04090 02 OF 02 251301Z

THERE WERE 63 IN THAT CATEGORY BUT NONE OF THEM WANTED TO GO. VADORA INDICATED THAT THEY HAD FREED COMMUNIST PARTY LEADER ARISMENDI BECAUSE HE WAS REPORTEDLY NEAR DEATH , BUT HE HAS RECOVERED AND IS IN MOSCOW AND AN AVID CRITIC OF HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES IN URUGUAY. VADORA EXPLAINED THAT SOME PRISONERS WHO HAD GONE INTO VOLUNTARY EXILE RETURNED SHORTLY AFTER TO RESUME FIGHTING.

11. VADORA RESTATED THAT HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THE U.S. WAS TRYING TO BE THE MORAL JUDGE OF THE WORLD. HE RECOGNIZED THAT THE USG DEALT WITH COMMUNISM AT A HIGH LEVEL, BUT COMPLAINED THAT WE HAD FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE COMMUNIST SUBVERSIVES THREAT TO SMALL NATIONS. HE COMPLAINED US DID NOT CARE ABOUT HEALTH OR WELL-BEING OF PEOPLE. HE THEN ASKED TODMAN TO CLARIFY U.S. HUMAN RIGHTS OBJECTIVES.

12. TODMAN OUTLINED IN DETAIL OUR HUMAN RIGHTS POSTURE AS DEFINED IN THE CHRISTOPHER CHICAGO SPEECH. VADORA INTERRUPTED AT ONE POINT TO COMMENT THAT NOBODY IN THE U.S. PROTESTED THE TUPAMARO VIOLATIONS WHEN THEY WERE MURDERING INNOCENT CITIZENS IN URUGUAY.

13. THE MEETING ENDED WITH THE URUGUAYANS EXPRESSING THEIR APPRECIATION FOR THE FRANKNESS AND CANDOR OF THE EXCHANGE.

14. THAT EVENING, THE CINCS AND OTHER KEY MILITARY LEADERS IN THE GOU ATTENDED A DINNER AT THE RESIDENCE WHICH INCLUDED FOREIGN

MINISTER ROVIRA, THE ENTIRE TODMAN PARTY AND MEMBER OF THE EMBASSY STAFF. TODMAN RE-RAISED THE QUESTION HE HAD POSED AT LUNCHEON; NAMELY HOW DOES THE GOU PROPOSE TO PREPARE THE ELECTORATE FOR FREE AND OPEN ELECTIONS IN 1981. VADORA TRIED UNSUCCESSFULLY TO OFFER A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH - IN THE PROCESS REVEALING THAT THE GOU HIGH CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MONTEV 04090 02 OF 02 251301Z

COMMAND HAS GIVEN VERY LITTLE THOUGHT TO THE SUBJECT. THEIR FEAR OF A RETURN TO THE POLITICAL WEAKNESSES OF THE PAST CLEARLY HAUNTS THEM AND IS AT THE HEART OF THEIR DILEMMA. THEY WANT A SAFE AND CONTROLLED POLITICAL PROCESS TO SUCCEED THEM. URUGUAYAN TRADITION RUNS IN A MORE LIBERAL DIRECTION - THUS THE LACK OF ANY REAL ANSWER TO THE QUESTION "HOW DO YOU GET FROM HERE TO THERE?"

15. CLEARED BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN.
TODMAN

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Message Attributes

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